

SPORTS

Pirates hope youth will improve in 2008

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1035-1324. That is the record of the Pittsburgh Pirates since 1992, which was the last time they had a winning record. It has been 16 years and three hat sizes of Barry Bonds since the Pirates were not even just a contender, but a team battling .500. Coming off a 2007 record of 68-94, the Bucco's will try to turn around the franchise and possibly put together a winning season.

To have a winning season, the Pirates are going to have to have three positions, left-field, pitching, and catcher, improve in 2008. The biggest drop off from 2006 to 2007 was the play of LF Jason Bay. Bay, who was a former all-star and rookie of the year in 2004, is the cornerstone power hitter in the Pirates lineup, since he was acquired by the Pirates in 2003. After hitting for .286 average (AVG), with 35 home runs (HR) and 109 runs batted in (RBI) in '06, Bay saw his production slip (.247 AVG, 21 HR and 85 RBI) in '07.

Rumors swirled around about a possible trade this summer that would land a top-end pitcher for Bay, but the Pirates held on to their left-fielder, hoping that he can get back on track in '08. If the Pirates plan to make any noise this year, they will have to receive better production from Bay.

Since the days of Doug Drabek, Tim Wakefield, and John Smiley, the Pirate organization has strug-

gled to put together a solid pitching staff, even though many excellent pitchers (Jason Schmidt, Bronson Arroyo, Oliver Perez) have come through the system. Some experts and scouts believe that

Headlining the Pirates' starting pitching are co-aces Ian Snell and Tom Gorzelanny. Snell, who was recently signed to a five-year extension, put up respectable numbers (9-12, 3.76 ERA and 177 SO)

Gorzelanny took the league by storm last season, putting together a 14-11 record, with an ERA of 3.88 and 135 strikeouts in his first full season in the major leagues. The Pirates will hope Gorzo' will avoid a sophomore slump; otherwise it could be a long year for the young pitcher.

Rounding out the rest of the starting pitching staff is Paul Malholm, Matt Morris, and Zach Duke. Malholm, who showed promise after a rough start in '07, is being counted on by the organization to finally have a breakout year, which Malholm has shown potential of having since his rookie year in '06. Morris is the veteran of the staff, who the Pirates hope to aid their young pitchers and to put up solid numbers like Morris did with the St. Louis Cardinals back in 2001. Duke was the ace of the staff not too long ago, but after two disappointing seasons in '06-'07, this might be Duke's last chance with the Pirates.

Finally, the catching position has been a problem since former Pirate Jason Kendall was traded in '04. The Pirates will look to catchers Ronny Paulino and Ryan Doumit to carry the load in '08 and possibly have a breakout year from at least one of the two catchers, who both have potential from both sides of the plate.

With the Pirates still in the rebuilding process...a 16-year rebuilding process...the Pirates' fans will hope with a new coaching staff and new ownership, they will actually have a team that can contend in '08.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Jason Bay need to get the bat going in 2008



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Ian Snell has the potential, but will that be enough?

the Pirates might finally have the pitching to get them to move up in the standings.

on a weak team in '07. With more money in his wallet and a chip on his shoulder from last year, Snell will look to improve his win record in '08.

Intramural Deadline Update

Indoor Track Meet

Deadline is Friday, Mar. 21 at 4 p.m.

Soccer

Deadline is Friday, Mar. 21 at 4 p.m.

Kickball

Deadline is Friday Mar. 28 at 4 p.m.

If interested contact Rob Wittman @ rww3@psu.edu

Top 5 Ego-Driven Sports Cities

by: Andrew McLachlan

- 5.) Miami (Panthers, Dolphins, Marlins, Heat)
- 4.) Pittsburgh (Penguins, Steelers, Pirates)
- 3.) New York (Rangers, Islanders, Jets, Mets, Yankees, Knicks)
- 2.) Boston (Bruins, Patriots, Red Sox, Celtics)
- 1.) Philadelphia (Flyers, Eagles, Phillies, 76ers)

Beacon NCAA March Madness Picks

Friday's Games	Andy	Chris	Ryan	Muska	Jess	Lenny
Clemson vs. Villanova	Villanova	Villanova	Clemson	Villanova	Clemson	Clemson
Gonzaga vs. Davidson	Davidson	Davidson	Gonzaga	Gonzaga	Gonzaga	Davidson
Miami (FL) vs. St. Mary's	St. Mary's	St. Mary's	Miami	St. Mary's	Miami	Miami
Drake vs. Western Kentucky	Drake	Drake	Drake	Western Kentucky	Drake	Drake
Butler vs. South Alabama	Butler	Butler	S. Alabama	Butler	So. Alabama	Butler
Mississippi State vs. Oregon	Oregon	Oregon	Mississippi State	Oregon	Oregon	Mississippi State
UConn vs. San Diego	UConn	UConn	San Diego	UConn	UConn	UConn
Indiana vs. Arkansas	Indiana	Indiana	Arkansas	Indiana	Arkansas	Arkansas
Tennessee vs. American	Tennessee	Tennessee	Tennessee	Tennessee	Tennessee	Tennessee
Georgetown vs. UMBC	Georgetown	Georgetown	Georgetown	Georgetown	Georgetown	Georgetown
Texas vs. Austin Peay	Texas	Texas	Texas	Texas	Texas	Texas
Oklahoma vs. St. Joseph's	St. Joe's	Oklahoma	Oklahoma	Oklahoma	Oklahoma	Oklahoma
North Carolina vs. Mt. St. Mary's	North Carolina	North Carolina	North Carolina	North Carolina	North Carolina	North Carolina
Vanderbilt vs. Siena	Vanderbilt	Vanderbilt	Vanderbilt	Vanderbilt	Vanderbilt	Vanderbilt
Louisville vs. Boise State	Louisville	Louisville	Louisville	Louisville	Louisville	Louisville
Memphis vs. UT-Arlington	Memphis	Memphis	Memphis	Memphis	Memphis	Memphis

